

Message Text

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PAGE 01 BEIRUT 03340 131554Z
ACTION SS-25

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FM AMEMBASSY BEIRUT
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INFO AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS
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S E C R E T BEIRUT 3340

EXDIS

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PINS PINT IS LE
SUBJ: SOUTH LEBANON: KAMAL AL-ASSAD'S REQUEST FOR CEASE-FIRE

1. CALLED ON PARLIAMENT SPEAKER KAMAL AL-ASSAD JULY 13 TO GIVE HIM RESPONSE TO HIS QUESTION OF JUNE 30 ABOUT CEASE-FIRE (BEIRUT 3110). TOLD HIM WE HAD NOT POSED TO ISRAELIS QUESTION HE HAD ASKED ME, I.E., WOULD ISRAELIS REFRAIN FROM OCCUPYING FRONTIER VILLAGES IF PALESTINIANS WITHDREW. WE HAD, HOWEVER, HAD GENERAL DISCUSSION WITH THEM RE CEASE-FIRE. THEY HAD SAID THEY WOULD WELCOME ONE FOR SECURITY REASONS BUT WANTED TO KNOW DETAILS. I THOUGHT WE COULD FAIRLY CONCLUDE THAT, GIVEN THEIR ASSURANCES THEY HAD NO INTENTION INVADING LEBANON, ISRAELIS WOULD NOT SEEK TO OCCUPY ISRAELI VILLAGES IN EVENT OF PALESTINIAN WITHDRAWAL. WE ASSUMED, ON OTHER HAND, THAT ISRAELIS WOULD MAKE NO COMMITMENT RE TRYING TO INFLUENCE ACTIONS OF CHRISTIAN FORCES UNTIL THEY HAD DETAILS IN HAND.

2. AL-ASSAD SAID CHRISTIANS TOTALLY UNDER ISRAELI CONTROL, SO ISRAELIS COULD RESTRAIN THEM IF THEY WISHED. PALESTINIAN CEASE-FIRE AND WITHDRAWAL PROPOSAL HAD RUN INTO TROUBLE ON VARIOUS ACCOUNTS. HIS IDEA HAD BEEN TO GET PALESTINIANS TO MOVE TO ARQUB, BUT THEY WERE

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UNWILLING TO DO SO BECAUSE THEY NEEDED PORT OF TYRE AND ARQUB TOO EXPOSED. HE WOULD LIKE ME, HOWEVER, TO PASS PERSONAL MESSAGE FROM HIM TO ISRAELIS: WERE THEY INTERESTED IN SIMPLE CEASE-FIRE, I.E., ONE IN WHICH EVERYONE WOULD STAY PUT BUT SIMPLY STOP SHOOTING? IF THEY WERE, WOULD THEY PLEASE DESIGNATE SOMEONE AMONG CHRISTIAN FORCES WITH WHOM HE COULD DISCUSS ARRANGEMENTS?

HE WOULD THEN MEET THEM SOMEWHERE ON LEBANESE TERRITORY, IN QULAYLA, RUMAYSH, ETC. LOCATION NOT IMPORTANT. ISRAELI DECISION TO ACCEPT CEASE-FIRE WAS.

3. I SAID I WOULD REPORT HIS REQUEST, BUT IF WE WERE TO MAKE APPROACH TO ISRAELIS WE NEEDED REQUEST FROM GOL, I.E., FROM FOREIGN MINISTRY. WHILE WE COULD TALK ABOUT THIS ON PERSONAL BASIS, WE NEEDED GOL OFFICIAL SANCTION IF WE TO ACT ON IT OFFICIALLY OURSELVES. HE CHARACTERIZED FONMIN BOUTROS AS TOO TIMID AND SAID HE HAD PERSONAL RESPONSIBILITY AS LEADER FROM THE AREA IN QUESTION TO DO SOMETHING ABOUT TRAGIC SITUATION. ISRAELIS WANTED TO KEEP PALESTINIANS AT DISTANCE. BY ACTIONS SUCH AS SLAUGHTER OF SOME 18 INNOCENT CIVILIANS AT YARIN LAST WEEK, CHRISTIAN FORCES WERE SOWING SECTARIAN HATRED WHERE NONE EXISTED BEFORE (YARIN IS SHI'A). THIS FURTHERED CAUSE OF PALESTINIANS AND LEFTISTS. PEOPLE OF RAMIYE AND AITA ASH-SHAAB WERE AFRAID CHRISTIANS PLANNING MOUNT SIMILAR ATTACK AGAINST THEM. HE DID NOT WANT PALESTINIANS IN THAT AREA EITHER, AND HE APPALLED BY WHAT CHRISTIANS HAD DONE. IF ISRAELIS SERIOUSLY INTERESTED IN PEACE ALONG BORDER, LET THEM RESPOND TO HIS REQUEST.

4. COMMENT: AM RELUCTANT TO SUGGEST THAT WE ACT ON ASSAD'S REQUEST UNTIL I HAVE HAD CHANCE TO TALK TO
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BOUTROS, WHO HAS RESERVATIONS ABOUT WORKABILITY OF CEASE-FIRE. IN INTEREST OF TIMELINESS, HOWEVER, AM REPORTING CONVERSATION AS IT OCCURRED. AM SEEING BOUTROS MORNING JULY 14.
PARKER

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NNN

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